

A SERMON:

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF

KING'S COLLEGE, WINDSOR,

JUNE 25TH, 1874,

BY

REV. CANON HENSLEY, D.D.

VICE-PRESIDENT OF KING'S COLLEGE,

AND

PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

HALIFAX, N. S.:

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The accompanying Sermon is printed at the request of many of my friends, among whom I am proud to reckon a large number of my former pupils. The subject was suggested by the words of the text, which occurs in the lesson for the day, June 25th. The Sermon was written in the midst of numerous Collegiate and Parochial engagements, and has no pretensions except such as may arise from a plain statement of facts, and a suggestion of practical remedies. I commit it to the consideration of my brethren, lay and clerical, with an earnest prayer for the blessing of the great Head of the Church upon it: to Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

J. M. HENSLEY,

Professor of Divinity.

KING'S COLLEGE,

July 9th, 1874.

I propose this morning to draw your attention to certain facts connected with the Church in this Province, especially in their bearing on the condition of our College, to endeavour to account for them, and to point out the way by which the present state of things may be improved.

The sentence from the First Lesson for the day has furnished me with the key-note, showing as it does the existence of a state of things in the days of Nehemiah not very dissimilar from our own, although probably we shall find that the causes are not altogether the same. We learn from the chapter from which our text is taken that on his second visit to Jerusalem Nehemiah found many of the salutary regulations, which he had formerly introduced, neglected, and many gross abuses tolerated by those who ought to have set a better example. Particularly, he tells us, "I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. Then contended I with the rulers, and said, why is the house of God forsaken?" There was no lack of men able and willing to do their work; but owing to the culpable negligence or worse than negligence, of others they had been obliged to turn their attention to other employments in order to secure a livelihood. The enforcement of the payment of the tithes and the administration of the supplies thus obtained by faithful men, was accompanied by the return of the Levites to their sacred duties. It is to be feared however, that it was only for a short time, for in the next generation we hear the prophet Malachi indicating a return to the former abuses: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say,

wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." iii. 8, 9. The fact in Nehemiah's case was the desertion of their posts by the Levites; the principal cause was the non-payment of the tithes, and the consequent failure of their means of support; the remedy, applied with a rigorous and faithful hand, was the regular payment of the tithes, as a duty owed to God.

Let us look at the facts in our own case. At the outset we may admit that during the past 25 years there has been a very large addition made to those engaged in the work of the Ministry in this Diocese, so that their numbers have, I believe, very nearly doubled in that period. At the same time we know that there has also been a very large increase in the population of the country, and there are constant complaints of want of Clergymen in all directions. Now should it be looked upon as a disparagement to either the past or the present generation of Missionaries, when we say that the religious requirements of the day demand a larger proportion of Clergy than was needed thirty years ago. With this in our recollection we can understand how it is that with some 90 Clergy the outcry for more labourers in the vineyard is as frequent as when there were but fifty. But this mere want of men is not the only fact with which we have to deal: if it were, our task would be comparatively simple. A more alarming circumstance is the fact that if all those who have been ordained in the Diocese remained with us, we should probably have many more than we require. Of course on the present occasion I cannot enter into all the details required to substantiate this assertion. I will content myself with adducing such portions as I am most familiar with in consequence of their connection with that department which has now been in my charge for nearly 15 years, especially as they may help to account partially for a matter of great interest to all the friends of our College, viz.: the paucity of Students when compared with the educational advantages offered. The facts are these: in that

fifteen years there has been sixty Divinity Students ; i. e. Students who have entered their names as designing to prepare for the Ministry. Of these 14 retired from the study ; two have died before completing their course, and the remainder have either been ordained, or will be in a short time. Of those ordained only 16 are at the present time to be found in Nova Scotia, although nearly all of them intended to labour in this Diocese, and the great majority were actually ordained here for that purpose. Or to put the matter more concisely the following will nearly represent the state of things : of every 4 Divinity Students in the period mentioned 3 have been ordained and but *one* remains in Nova Scotia. This is certainly a remarkable state of things, and one well worthy of serious consideration ; but this is not all. A closer inspection will lead to the conclusion that this remarkable exodus of our Clergy has taken place principally in the last few years. Thus on taking up the Report of the D. C. S. for 1866 and comparing it with the last printed report I find that while the former gives in Nova Scotia the names of 57 of the Clergy educated at King's College and ten more have been ordained from here since, in the last printed Report there are only 45 from King's College, leaving over 20 who have left the Province. It is true that death and sickness have deprived us of the services of some, but these are causes that will only account for a small portion. I also observe that during the same period 10 Students have given up their intention of offering their services as Candidates for the Ministry. Some of these have no doubt been influenced entirely by private reasons, but it seems probable that in some instances at least they have been influenced by the same causes which have led to so many of our Clergy leaving the Province for other spheres of labour. I may also add that in looking to previous years and taking a similar number of Divinity Students at our College, so far as I was able to do so, I find a much larger proportion remaining in the Province, although this would take us back to a date about 45 years from the present time, when natural causes alone would be suf-

ficient to deprive us of a large number. This would seem to confirm the conclusion to which the dates above have been tending, viz. . that the operating causes, whatever they are, are more powerful during the last eight or ten years, than they were at an earlier period. It may be as well to add, without going into details, that the same condition of things may be traced among such of the Clergy as have not been educated here, although perhaps in a less marked degree. The fact, then, to which I wish to draw attention is that a very large proportion of our Divinity Students of late years, amounting to nearly 3 out of 4, do not remain permanently in the Province. Can we assign any cause or causes for this?

In making this enquiry it would not of course be possible, even if it were desirable, to enter into an examination of the qualifications of our Clergy: indeed, the necessity for such a course is completely removed by the fact that those who leave the Province have no difficulty, in general, in procuring employment elsewhere. We can at the present moment point to a considerable number of those ordained here, who are now occupying positions of influence and importance in other parts of North America, and even in the mother country.

I have no doubt that one of the main causes of the present state of things, and probably the principal cause, is the insufficient remuneration that is offered to the Clergy. Many seem to think, or certainly act as if they thought, that the Clergy ought to be free from all such mercenary considerations: shutting their eyes to the fact that the Scriptures clearly enforce the right of the Ministers of the Gospel to an adequate remuneration for their services, and strongly inculcate on the people the duty of contributing according to the means that God has given them. In truth, even from a business point of view, nothing could be more short-sighted than a curtailing of the Clergyman's means of support. No calling is so constant in its demand on the powers of the mind, or requires for its efficient discharge such complete freedom from cares and anxieties. From the nature of

the case there must always be more than sufficient of these, without adding to them those which arise from the conviction, that, with the greatest possible economy, it is impossible to meet the absolutely necessary expenses of the family. What must be the effect of such a state of things as this? Will it not lead in the first place to the practice of wandering from parish to parish in hopes of bettering their position? and will it not also tend in the next place to prevent the Clergy from seeking to influence others from entering the Ministry, knowing from their own bitter experience the many difficulties attending the profession? We have no right to demand from our Clergy that they should exhibit qualifications more suitable to angels than to men, or to ignore their claims to the rights recognized in the word of God. We may be thankful that numbers of men are to be found who will devote themselves to the sacred work, in spite of the wretched pittance offered for their support, and who will gladly spend and be spent for the sake of their Redeemer and for the souls He came to seek and to save: but this does not affect the duty of the members of the Church towards them, or relieve them of their responsibility to afford them proper maintenance. To those who have considered the question of the support of the Ministry, the way in which most people look at their duties in this respect is a remarkable phenomenon. We see men who do not hesitate to pay large sums for the services of the lawyer or the physician, begrudging a comparative trifle for the support of their Clergyman: surely not because the work in which he is engaged is less important; surely not because they look on the concerns of the body as superior to those of the soul.

We deplore and protest against such a state of things as this, and such a mode of estimating the services of the Clergy. We must all feel that with the Clergyman, even more than with the skilful Physician, what we can give of this world's goods can never be adequate for his services: but that should not influence us to think less of our duty in this respect, but should rather make us the more particular, as our only way of practically showing our sense of benefits received.

The point for us now is, however, that inadequate support will tend to diminish the number of the Clergy, by leading those already ordained to seek other spheres of labour, as well as by preventing others from entering the Ministry. It is, I believe, a fact well established from Ecclesiastical History, that no Church can flourish long that is not supplied with a native Ministry. In the early, or Missionary period, it must of course be dependent on external supply, but it speaks ill for its vitality or its progress if this state of things long continues. The statistics adduced above show that the proportion of native Clergy is rapidly diminishing with us: those who have come from abroad may be just as efficient as those who have left us, but that will not reverse the teachings of history, which is constantly repeating itself. Heads of families will hesitate to influence their sons in favour of the Church as a profession, knowing that there are other ways of serving God, and fearing to expose their children to the harassing anxieties too often attending the life of a Minister of the Gospel. Above all, the parsonages, which in times past have so often been the early home of many a faithful Clergyman, will serve as so many beacons to deter others from the peril of incurring the same cares and anxieties which their tenants experience.

We may ask, are the salaries of the Clergy in general so inadequate as to warrant us in concluding that this may be a main cause of the state of things we deplore? We may take the estimate of the D. C. S. in some sort as our guide. Until quite recently its efforts have been directed towards securing a minimum of \$300 for every Clergyman in the Province: I believe that in the future it intends to fix \$700 as the minimum. I am afraid that in a large number of cases even the sum first named is rarely, if ever, attained; while very few, except those who draw their salaries from some of the Home Societies, reach the larger sum, and scarcely any receive \$800. We should, therefore, be within bounds if we were to put the average income of those paid by the Church in this Province at \$700. Is this to be looked

upon as sufficient? Most of us know that it does not equal the wages of a skilled mechanic, while the necessary expenditure is much higher in the case of the Clergyman, without putting it on higher ground.

But contrast the present state of things with that of 40 years ago. Taking the daily wages of the labourer as our standard, which under ordinary circumstances is the most satisfactory, we find that the ordinary expenses of life are now about double what they were at the period referred to. This could be easily corroborated by a comparison of the prices of the usual articles of food, which have all greatly increased, with few exceptions, notably, that of bread. Now 40 years ago most of the Clergy, paid as they were by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, received £200 sterling, besides in many cases a Parsonage and Glebe, so that in every case they must have had half as much more, and in many cases twice as much as their successors in the present day. If to this we add the consideration suggested above, arising from the increased price of most of the necessities of life, it does not need a very abstruse calculation to convince us of the serious fact that the average salary of the Clergy in the present day is from one-fourth to one-third of what it was 40 years ago. Can we wonder under these circumstances that our Clergy leave the Province? Can we wonder that our Divinity-Students retire from their studies? Can we wonder that their numbers are few? Can we wonder that parents hesitate to induce their sons to enter the ministry? Ought we not rather to be surprised that under these circumstances so many are to be found ready for the work?

I think enough has been said to show clearly that the scanty remuneration offered to our Clergy is by itself sufficient to account for the small number of Candidates for the Ministry to be found in the Province, as well as for the actual departure of those already ordained. There are other causes which might be assigned, but they are of such a nature as not to be easily considered on such an occasion as this, and any allusion to them

will better have its place in the concluding portion of my remarks to which I now proceed, in which I purpose to offer a few suggestions as to the best mode of obviating and remedying the present state of things.

The mere supply of funds could easily be obtained by a return to the remedy adopted by Nehemiah in the similar dilemma to which our attention has been drawn. His remedy was the regular payment of the tithes, and who can doubt that if each member of the Church was conscientiously to give into the Lord's treasury the tenth of his means, we should have ample funds for all the purposes of piety, necessity and charity, as well as of justice to the Clergy. And why should this not be the case? It is true that the payment of tithes is no longer obligatory as it was under the law, but the duty of giving of our means to the service of God is as incumbent on the Christian as it was on the Jew, and so far from our obligations being less because we are living under a covenant of grace, we ought to feel them as greater, because our mercies are greater. Even before the promulgation of the law of Moses the tithe seems to have been looked on as a suitable proportion to offer for religious purposes. Should it not, then, seem to be the duty of each member of the Church to give at least a tithe of his means, while not necessarily confining himself by this limit? It requires very little consideration to see that the means available for the purposes above mentioned would be immensely increased if this were done. There may be, and probably are, persons who systematically devote the tithe of their means, but it needs but a cursory inspection of the incomes of our religious and benevolent societies, with a large allowance for private charities, to convince us that the number of those who act thus are very few. There are congregations in the Province in which if the tithe of the incomes of all the members were taken it would probably be found greatly in excess of all the sums publicly given for religious purposes. What is wanted is for our people to realize their responsibility in the sight of God, and to feel that it is their bounden duty to give

liberally of the means that God has given them, "not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver."

The funds at our disposal for the support of the Clergy certainly fall far short of what they ought to be. Some of our most wealthy Parishes give scarcely anything to the D. C. S. Differences of opinion on certain points exist in the Province, and these have been allowed, more or less, to interfere with the working of our religious Societies. It would not be difficult to shew that they have also had their effect on the supply of Candidates for the Ministry from among ourselves, and consequently on the number of our native Clergy. That differences of opinion will continue to exist among us we may feel morally certain. They are inseparable from our imperfect nature, which is not able to perceive every phase of the truth with equal clearness. Hence the three great schools of thought have always been found in the Church, the Sacramental, the Emotional, and the Philosophic, and those who would seek to crush out any one of them are sure to fail.

The Church of England is built on a comprehensive basis, and can at all periods point to men of these different Schools, who, with views peculiar to their own School, have united thorough loyalty to the great and fundamental truths of the Gospel as taught by their Church in the Formularies and Articles. So may it be to the end of this present dispensation. Let us all be content to accept this state of things, and not endeavour to make everything exactly square with our own views. In essentials, unity: in non-essentials, diversity: in all things, charity.

With a steady determination on the part of the Clergy to sacrifice differences of opinion on minor points, and to hold fast to the doctrine and discipline of our Reformed Church, and with a conscientious fulfilment on the part of the Laity of their obligations, we should soon see the departure of our Clergy arrested, the number of our Divinity Students increase, and our Church continue to be, as she has been in times past, one of the chief instruments for the propagation and maintenance of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.